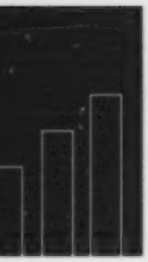
2005 Student Assessment Results



Minister's Report to Parents

NOVA SCOTIA
Education

106-07343/

Minister's Report to Parents

2005 Student Assessment Results

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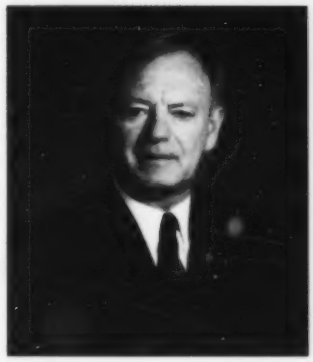
NOVA SCOTIA

Minister's Message to Parents



Dear Parents,

It is my pleasure to release the 2005 Minister's Report to Parents. This report is part of my commitment to you, and all Nova Scotians, to provide valuable information on an annual basis about student learning, and to report on the state of public school education in this province.

This year's report contains assessment results for language arts, mathematics, and science for the 2004–2005 school year, at both the provincial and national levels. We have added, for the first time, results from last fall's Elementary Literacy Assessment. We are also happy to include stories outlining some of the special successes our school boards have achieved with students in the past year.

As you will read, there has been improvement in some subjects over the past school year. But I am also concerned that some students continue to struggle with the basics in reading, writing, and mathematics. These basic skills are the foundation for success, and that is why we continue to add resources to help our students perform better.

Although our students continue to need support in mathematics and language arts, our students are well ahead of their counterparts in many of the major industrialized countries of the world.

Our provincial assessments are essential to student learning. They show us where there are problems and what needs to be done to improve results.

We are carefully building a better foundation for student learning using what we have learned from these and past provincial assessments and from what many of you told us during a major consultation with education partners in February 2005.

Input from the Education Partner's Forum guided us as we developed our new plan for education—Learning For Life II—which was unveiled last May. Learning for Life II focusses on helping all students reach their full potential. It encourages students to live active, healthy lives, while offering more support for smaller class sizes, special education, mathematics, and literacy.

It will take time to get where we need to be, but we are on the right path. If we all work together, we will make a difference for the students of Nova Scotia.

Honourable Jamie Muir
Minister of Education

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Introduction

Why Assessments Are Important

Provincial assessments provide a reliable picture of the state of education in Nova Scotia. Provincial assessments, based on the prescribed curriculum, contribute important information for informed education decision making—at all levels. Provincial assessments help address many important questions about how our students are doing, how our system is performing, and what we need to do to improve.

The Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS) is the assessment program designed for Nova Scotia. It includes provincial assessments for elementary, junior high, and senior high schools, as well as national and international assessments. PLANS, when fully implemented, will administer assessments in mathematical and language literacy at each key stage of the curriculum (i.e., grades 3, 6, and 9) and examinations in grade 12.

Information from provincial assessments helps Nova Scotians monitor the progress of students across the province. As well, results are used to evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve student learning and achievement. Results also help the department to focus its resources and develop effective educational policies.

What's New in This Year's Report?

For 2005, there are some significant changes. The format of the Minister's Report is new. As well, the report has been expanded to contain more information about our schools and our school system.

Included, for the first time, are school-by-school results for the Elementary Literacy Assessment. As well, there are some notable success stories from our school boards and information about our provincial education system.

This year's report expands on previous editions of the Minister's Report to Parents, first published in 2001. This report continues to give parents information about the achievement of Nova Scotia students in provincial, national, and international assessments.

Overview

The Assessments

Provincial Assessments

During 2004–2005, provincial assessments were administered in grade 6 and grade 12.

Grade 6 students participated in the Elementary Literacy Assessment. The assessment, conducted in the fall of the school year, identified students who were struggling with reading and/or writing. Literacy Support Plans were developed for each of these students.

Grade 12 students of language arts, mathematics, and the sciences were required to write Nova Scotia Examinations (NSE). NSE were administered at the end of January and June. The results from these examinations count for 30 percent of students' final marks. NSE are designed to test what students are learning in their classes.

Facts:

All provincial assessments are developed by Nova Scotia teachers.

National Assessments

The final results for School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) in science are included in this report.

Since 1993, Nova Scotia has administered SAIP. SAIP consisted of assessment cycles in mathematics, reading and writing, and science. This national program has concluded.

A new national assessment, the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP), which is more closely aligned with a leading international assessment, will begin in 2007. PCAP will also assess reading, mathematics, and science skills of our 13-year-old and 15-year-old students.

Fact:

Nova Scotia participated in the development of PCAP.

International Assessments

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a leading international assessment, is administered in countries participating in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). OECD countries control 90 percent of the world's economy. PISA was first administered to our 15-year-old students in 2000. At that time, reading was the major focus, with mathematics and science taking a minor role. In 2003 PISA was administered in over 40 countries, including Canada, and mathematics was the major focus. PISA is administered every three years, and science will be the major focus in 2006.

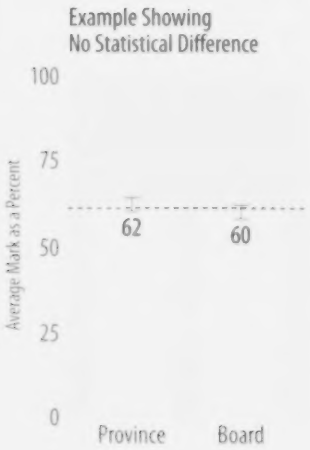
Fact: Nova Scotia is the site for marking PIRLS in Canada in 2006.

The Progress in International Reading Studies (PIRLS) is another international assessment. Nova Scotian grade 4 students will participate in PIRLS in the spring of 2006.

What Do the Numbers Mean?

Fact: **I - Error Band**
The error bands in the graph below indicate that the actual results fall within a range of 4 percent (2 percent above the average mark, and 2 percent below the average mark).

The results in this year's report are presented as percentages, with the exception of the results of international assessments. International results are presented as scale scores which provide a value for measuring student performance where 500 is the international average. When comparing results for Nova Scotia Examinations, either from one year to the next or from one school board to another, simply looking at the height of the bars in each graph may be misleading. What may look like an improvement or decline in the results may not be statistically significant. This is because the results used to produce the graphs are based on representative samples of students and therefore actually fall within certain statistical limits.



For example, a result of 62 percent in a chemistry examination may actually be a little higher or lower than 62 due to sampling error. In this example, let's consider that the sampling error is +/–2 percent. This would mean that the actual results are somewhere between 60 percent and 64 percent. Therefore, if a board averaged 60 percent and the provincial average was 62 percent, then there would be no statistical difference between the board and provincial results.

Therefore, when interpreting the graph on the left, it would be wrong to say that the students in the board performed below the students in the province as a whole. Despite looking as if they had a lower result on the graph, students in the board could have performed as well as students in the province. It is noted throughout this report when results are statistically significant.

How Our School System is Organized

There are seven regional anglophone school boards which enrol 97.2 percent of all public school students. The provincial school board for Acadian/francophone students, known as the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), includes the remaining 2.8 percent of students. Nova Scotia's total public school population was 145 396 from primary to grade 12 during the 2004–2005 school year. Overall, it is anticipated that school enrolment will continue to decrease over the next few years. Children who are five years old on or before October 1 of the current school year are admitted to grade primary. Students must attend school until they are 16 years old.

Fact: In 2004–2005 the province had a teaching force of 9580, and an overall student/teacher full-time equivalent (FTE) ratio of 15.7:1.

AVRSB	Annapolis Valley Regional School Board
CBVRSB	Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board
CCRSB	Chignecto-Central Regional School Board
CSAP	Conseil scolaire acadien provincial
HRSB	Halifax Regional School Board
SSRSB	South Shore Regional School Board
SRSB	Strait Regional School Board
TCRSB	Tri-County Regional School Board

Our Social Context

Nova Scotia has a population of 937 889, with a higher rural population than the Canadian average. The annual population growth rate is below 1 percent, and immigration is low compared to the rest of Canada. About 10 percent of the population speaks both English and French or French only. Among the total population, 3.8 percent consists of visible minorities. Unemployment rates in Nova Scotia are typically above the Canadian average.

How Public Education is Funded

In the last number of years, funding for school boards has increased, and student enrolments have declined as seen in the table below.

Year	Cost	Enrolment	Cost Per Student
2001–02	$927 164 581	154 476	$6002
2002–03	$950 337 370	151 862	$6258
2003–04	$998 708 900	148 700	$6716
2004–05	$1 031 434 239	146 370	$7047
2005–06	$1 087 879 800	143 321	$7591

Summary of Assessment Results for Mathematics

Provincial Assessment

Elementary and Junior High School

In the 2006–2007 school year, a new grade 3 assessment will be administered. The assessment will examine students' mathematical understanding. Students who are having difficulty will be given support.

A provincial program assessment for elementary and junior high mathematics was conducted between 2001 and 2004. In 2001 and 2003, assessments were administered to grade 5 students and in 2002 and 2004, grade 8 students were also assessed. These assessments were designed to gauge the level of implementation of the Atlantic Canada Mathematics curriculum.

It became evident, from these program assessments, that students were struggling with mathematics in both elementary and junior high school. The department initiated a mathematics strategy to assist teachers to help their students. As well, a student assessment program was initiated in the early years to monitor student achievement.

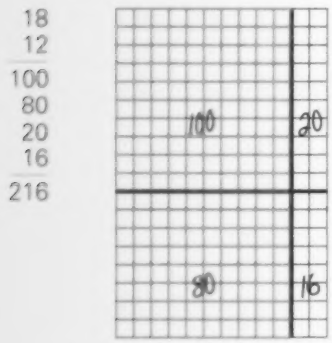
Math Strategies in 2005

- Students are now spending more time on math in grades primary to 8.
- Homework activity packs were delivered to every Primary to grade 3 classroom.
- Last year, $500,500 more was spent on professional development for math teachers.
- Grades 4 and 9 students have new math textbooks.

Can you answer this?

18 12

Our grade 5 students can!



Can you answer this?

$5(-4.2+2.16)$

Our grade 8 students can!

$$\begin{array}{r} -4.20 \\ +2.16 \\ \hline -2.04 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} -2.04 \\ 5 \\ \hline -10.20 \end{array}$$

$5(-4.2+2.16) = -10.20$

Senior High School Mathematics

Fact: Class marks account for 70 percent of grade 12 students' final marks.

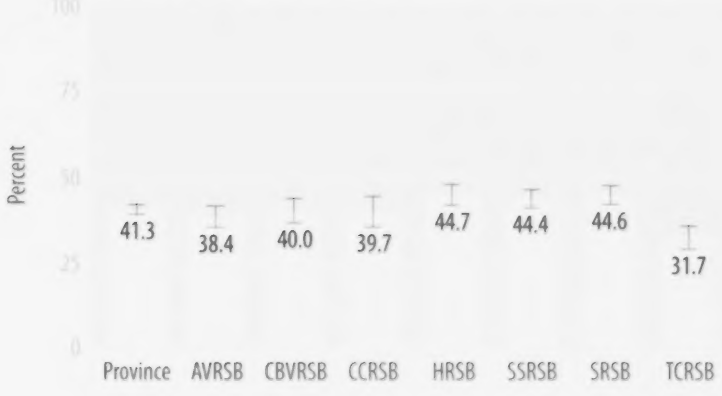
In January and June 2005, the department administered examinations in Mathematics 12 and Advanced Mathematics 12. The examinations were marked by the students' own teachers. The department collected a sample of student booklets, representing each regional school board, and these were marked by a panel of specialist mathematics teachers.

The results of the Mathematics 12 examination were particularly troubling. The provincial average was 41 percent for this examination, and the pass rate was 31 percent. For Advanced Mathematics 12, results were better than those for Mathematics 12, but not good. The provincial average for this examination was 54 percent with a pass rate of 57 percent.

>> The NSE in Mathematics 12 and Advanced Mathematics 12 were administered for the first time in the 2003–2004 school year. During this first administration teachers were permitted to omit questions on topics that had not been covered in class. The department did not centrally mark any student booklets during this first year of administration. There are no results to report for 2004.

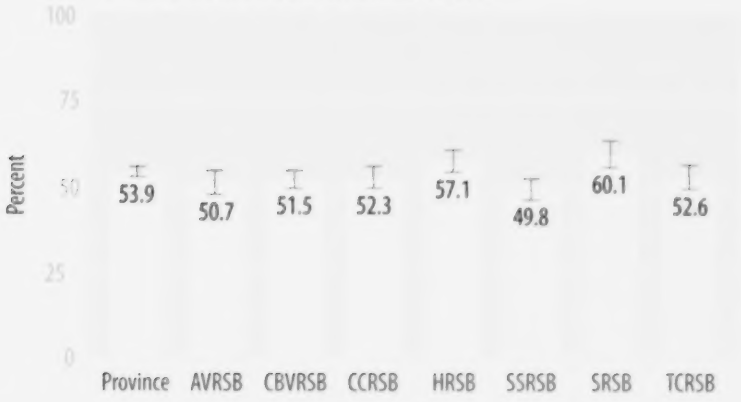
Fact: The highest mark was 95 percent and the lowest mark was 3 percent.

Provincial and Board Results for Math 12, 2005



I - Error band: see page 4 for more information

Provincial and Board Results for Advanced Math 12



Facts: The highest mark was 100 percent and the lowest mark was 5 percent.

Of the 7552 students who wrote both exams, 44 percent wrote the advanced math exam.

National Assessment

There are no national assessment results for mathematics in this year's report. PCAP, the new national assessment program planned for 2007, will assess our students in mathematics. Results will be available in 2008.

In 1993, 1997, and 2001, our 13- and 16-year-old students participated in SAIP mathematics. The results were reported in previous editions of the *Minister's Report to Parents*. Nova Scotia's results were below the national average in 2001 after previously performing at the Canadian average.

International Assessment

The next administration of PISA will take place in the spring of 2006, when PISA will focus on science. Mathematics and reading, the focus of previous PISA assessments, will be included, but in a minor role. New results for this assessment will be published in a future edition of the *Minister's Report to Parents*.

PISA mathematics results for 2000 and 2003 were presented in last year's *Minister's Report to Parents*. Nova Scotian students performed above the international average, ahead of many countries, including Sweden, the United States, Ireland, and Germany. Nevertheless, Nova Scotian students performed below the Canadian average.

Fact: Nova Scotia students performed better in PISA than students in the majority of participating countries.

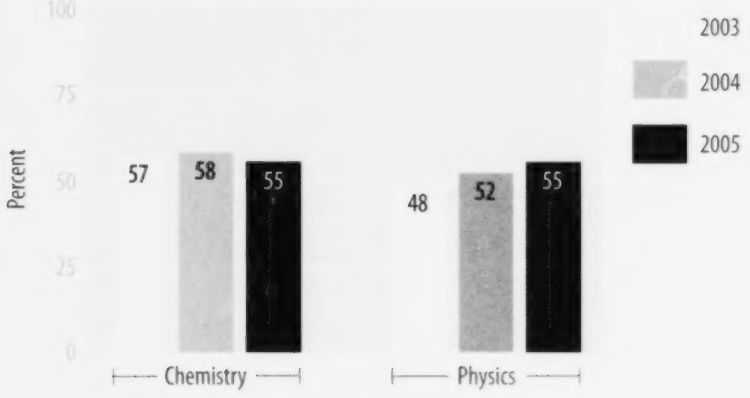
Summary of Assessment Results for Science

Provincial Assessment

There are no provincial assessments for science in elementary and junior high schools. In senior high school, NSE are administered each year in January and June. As with other NSE, 50 percent is the requirement for students to pass each examination.

The graph that follows gives the average results for Chemistry 12 and Physics 12 examinations.

Provincial Results for Grade 12 Science Examinations
Chemistry and Physics 2003–2005



Provincial and Board Results for Chemistry 2005

Facts:

The highest mark in Chemistry 12 was 98 percent and the lowest mark was 10 percent.

Students writing the Chemistry exam: 3318

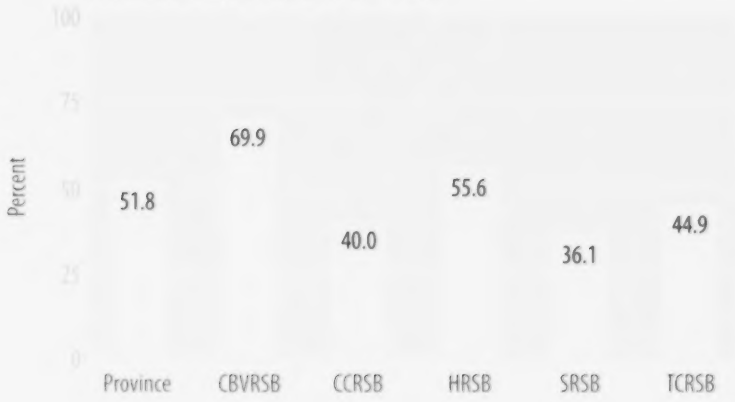
Some school boards offer Chimie 12 for French Immersion students.

Facts:

The highest mark in Chimie 12 was 92 percent and the lowest mark was 17 percent.

Students writing the Chimie exam: 226

Provincial and Board Results for Chimie 2005

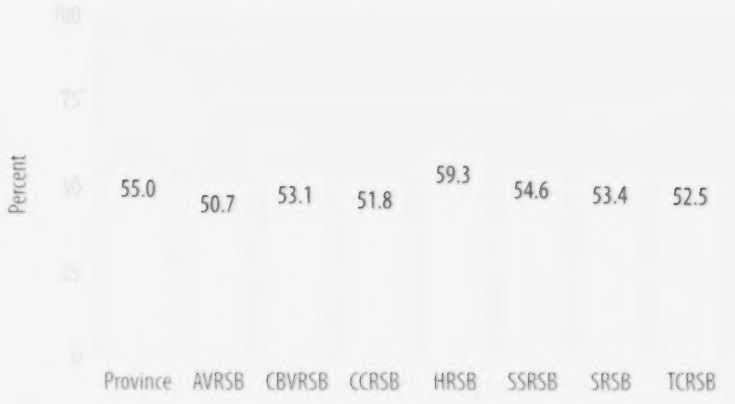


Facts:

The highest mark in Physics 12 was 98 percent and the lowest mark was 9 percent.

Students writing the Physics exam: 1682

Provincial and Board Results for Physics 2005



The provincial results in chemistry have declined in 2005, although the change is not statistically significant. Overall, student performance in chemistry and physics have improved since the first administration of these examinations in 2000 and 2001 respectively.

National Assessment

The SAIP science assessment was administered to 13- and 16-year-old Nova Scotian students in 1996, 1999, and 2004. The results for 2004 are provided for the first time in the following charts.

* Level 2 and level 3 are the standard of performance for 13- and 16-year-old students respectively.

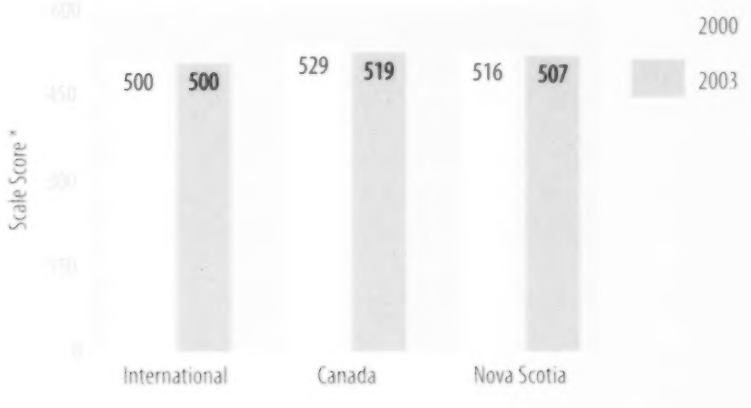
There is a statistical significance in the performance of our 13-year-old students in 2004. Their performance was below the national average.

International Assessment

In 2006, science will be the primary focus of this international assessment.

Nova Scotian 15-year-olds have participated in both the 2000 and 2003 administrations of PISA where reading and mathematics, respectively, were the primary components. Those results were presented in last year's edition of the *Minister's Report to Parents*. Nova Scotia performed better than the majority of countries in both years. In these previous administrations of PISA, the science component has only been a minor part of the assessment.

PISA Science Results



* International results are presented as scale scores which provide a value for measuring student performance where 500 is the international average.

Nova Scotian students performed above the international average in science, but below the Canadian average. In 2000, no significant difference was observed between the achievement of boys and girls. However, in 2003, the performance of the boys was better than that of the girls.

Summary of Assessment Results for Language Arts

Provincial Assessment

Elementary Literacy Assessment

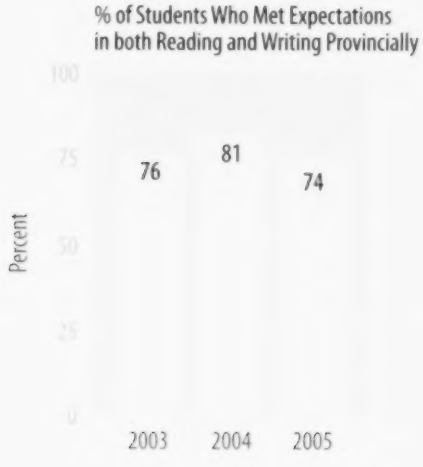
In September and October 2005, the French and English Elementary Literacy Assessments were administered to students in grade 6. Individual student results were given to parents. Some students were identified as experiencing difficulty with reading and/or writing. Once these students were identified, a Literacy Support Plan was developed at the students' schools in collaboration with teachers and parents/guardians. Students who did not achieve at the provincial level of expectation in reading and/or writing are receiving help to improve their literacy skills.

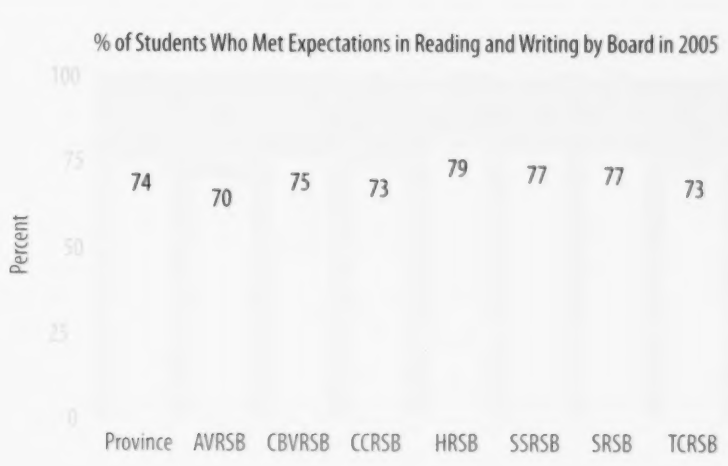
The assessment was first administered in 2003. The following charts present the overall results for the last three years and the results for each school board.

Literacy Strategies in 2005

- Elementary students now get 90 minutes of language arts instruction every single day.
- Almost $2 million is spent helping students having difficulties reading and/or writing in grades 7 and 8.
- A new 220-hour English 10 Plus course has been implemented to help support students needing additional support in grade 10.

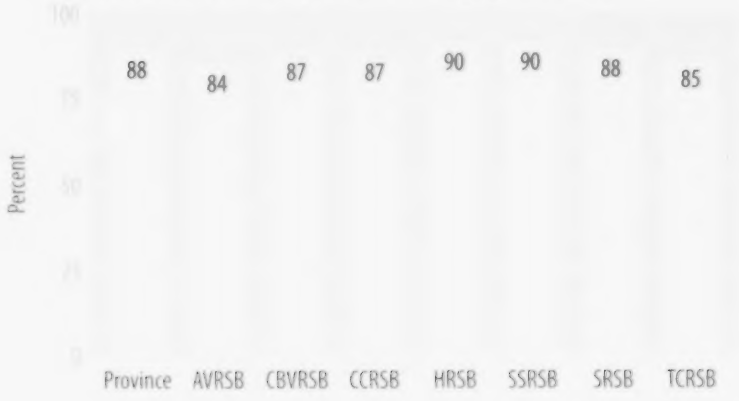
>> ENGLISH ELEMENTARY LITERACY ASSESSMENT



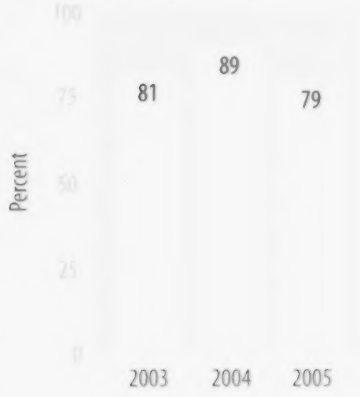


% of Students Who Met Expectations in Reading Provincially

% of Students Who Met Expectations in Reading by Board in 2005



% of Students Who Met Expectations in Writing Provincially



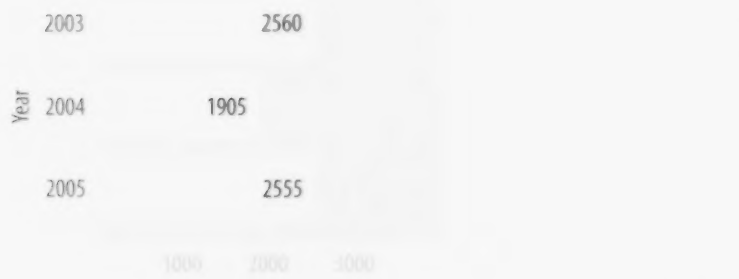
% of Students Who Met Expectations in Writing by Board 2005

Facts:

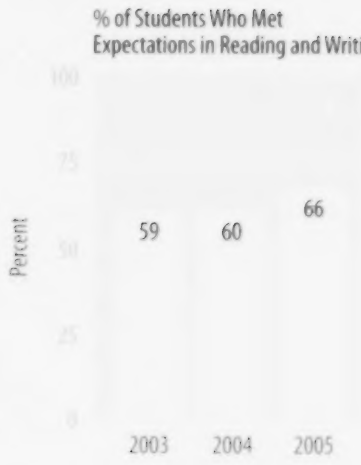
In October 2005, 9973 grade 6 students wrote the Elementary Literacy Assessment.

Students performed better in reading than in writing.

Total Number of Students Who Require a Literacy Support Plan



>> FRENCH ELEMENTARY LITERACY ASSESSMENT



The decline in writing performance for anglophone students in 2005 is significant. The department is reviewing the results to determine what more can be done to improve students' writing skills. The improvement in writing performance for Acadian/Francophone students is significant.

It is important to note that elementary students in French and English have different curricula and different requirements in language arts. Therefore, the French and English assessments were not the same, and no comparisons can be made between the results for each linguistic group.

As with any new assessment initiative, it will take time to determine trends in student performance.

Fact: In September 2005, 318 students wrote the Elementary Literacy Assessment in French.

V V V V V V V V

Elementary Literacy Assessment

Schools Reports

Elementary Literacy Assessment

Background

The Elementary Literacy Assessment is part of the province's Learning for Life plan to ensure young Nova Scotians have the literacy skills they need to succeed in school and in life. It was administered from September 26 to 29, 2005 (French) and October 18 to 21, 2005 (English). During the assessment, students read a variety of materials, including short stories, information texts, poems, and visual media texts, and answered questions based on those readings. Students were also required to write a letter suggesting a solution to a problem, and were required to write a letter suggesting a solution to a problem and write a story in response to a prompt. The charts on the following pages show student performance in terms of not yet meeting, meeting, or exceeding the expectations for reading and writing.

Fact: 85% of French Immersion students (who wrote the assessment in English) met or exceeded expectations in reading and writing compared to 74% of the general student population.

Helping All Students Succeed

The assessment allowed grade 6 students in Nova Scotia to demonstrate how well they have learned selected reading and writing outcomes of the elementary language arts curriculum. Its purpose is to provide information about individual students' reading and writing skills, so that students who are struggling in reading and writing can be given more support to help catch up. The Department of Education plans to build on its program of monitoring and supporting student progress with another literacy assessment to be administered when these grade 6 students reach grade 9.

Fact: 69% of males met or exceeded expectations in reading and writing compared to 83% of females.

Working With Teachers

The assessment was developed by the department's Evaluation Services Division with the help of grade 6 teachers, and was field-tested in schools across Nova Scotia. The performance levels required in order for students to meet expectations in reading and in writing were determined by teachers. The writing sections of the assessment were marked by a team of teachers under the direction of the Department of Education.

Literacy Strategies in 2005

- The Literacy Mentors Program expanded by 10 full-time positions in grades primary to 9.
- There are one million more books in classrooms.
- By the end of this year, the department will have invested $1.4 million in resources to support writing in grades 4–7.
- Ten thousand dictionaries and 10 000 thesauruses were delivered to grade 4–6 classrooms to support writing and language instruction.

Sharing Responsibility

It should be remembered that while literacy skills are developed in the school, they are also developed in the home, in the community, and in other areas of life, and are influenced by many factors. The results of the Elementary Literacy Assessment, therefore, should not be seen solely as a reflection of the students' teachers or schools, nor should the results be used to rank or compare schools.

Supporting Students

Providing individual and school-by-school results is part of the province's Learning for Life plan. The results give parents, teachers, school boards and the Department of Education information to support all students, especially those who are struggling with reading and/or writing.

Parents and guardians have received their own children's results. Schools are contacting parents of students who did not yet meet expectations to discuss the results and ways to support these students. The support will continue in junior high and for as long as it is needed.

As well, each school has its own students' results, which will help teachers, principals, parents and guardians, and others with plans for improving their schools. All partners will have results each year to measure progress and the impact of decisions designed to improve students' literacy skills.

The department will continue to work with its partners to help all students in Nova Scotia learn and grow to their full potential.

Note:

- Schools with six or fewer grade 6 students are not included in this report.
- Schools for which there is incomplete data are not included in this report.
- 'Numbers of Students' does not include students with Language Arts Individual Program Plans, students who were exempted, or students from whom there was insufficient evidence.
- French immersion students wrote the assessment in English.
- 'Exceeds expectations' is a designation given to reading scores above 90% and writing scores that meet the criteria in all elements of writing in both writing tasks. This designation does not appear on individual student reports.
- Percentages in each section may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Annapolis Valley Regional School Board

2005 Elementary Literacy Assessment • **SCHOOL RESULTS**							
		Reading			Writing		
	Number of Students	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)
Nova Scotia	9976	12	71	17	21	33	46
Annapolis Valley Regional School Board	1169	16	68	16	26	32	42
Annapolis East Elementary	90	14	72	13	14	37	49
Annapolis Royal Regional Academy	84	21	68	11	29	31	40
Berwick and District	36	19	56	25	36	28	36
Bridgetown Regional Elementary	41	20	76	5	37	37	27
Brooklyn District Elementary	54	11	70	19	24	37	39
Cambridge and District Elementary	23	35	57	9	35	39	26
Coldbrook and District	52	10	73	17	15	35	50
Dr. Arthur Hines	13	15	77	8	23	38	38
Evangeline Middle School	126	13	73	14	33	29	39
Falmouth District	37	11	65	24	16	32	51
Gaspereau Valley Elementary	28	11	79	11	32	29	39
Hantsport	31	19	65	16	35	29	35
Kings County Academy	63	22	63	14	32	32	37
L.E. Shaw Elementary	36	31	53	17	33	25	42
Lawrencetown Consolidated Elementary	23	9	74	17	35	22	43
Newport Station District	15	7	73	20	20	33	47
Northeast Kings Education Centre	115	23	63	15	34	36	30
Pine Ridge Middle School	170	12	75	13	22	29	49
Somerset and District Elementary	28	14	54	32	29	14	57
Three Mile Plains District	15	13	53	33	20	27	53
Windsor Elementary	38	11	74	16	21	32	47
Windsor Forks District	19	11	74	16	5	63	32
Wolfville	32	6	56	38	16	31	53

Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board

2005 Elementary Literacy Assessment • SCHOOL RESULTS							
		Reading			Writing		
	Number of Students	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)
Nova Scotia	9976	12	71	17	21	33	46
Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board	1138	13	73	14	20	38	42
Baddeck Academy	26	0	77	23	12	42	46
Ball's Creek Consolidated	9	11	78	11	22	44	33
Boularderie Elementary	11	0	73	27	0	45	55
Bras D'Or Elementary	46	17	67	15	24	37	39
Bridgeport	9	0	89	11	11	56	33
Brookland Elementary	89	11	72	17	13	38	48
Cape Smokey Elementary	19	11	68	21	26	53	21
Coxheath Elementary	30	3	83	13	17	20	63
Cusack-Cornwallis Complex	65	9	78	12	14	37	49
Donkin-Gowrie Complex	23	9	70	22	22	22	57
Florence Elementary	31	32	68	0	45	45	10
George D. Lewis	9	11	78	11	11	11	78
Glace Bay Elementary	102	16	76	8	30	34	35
Greenfield Elementary	64	8	88	5	22	45	33
Harbourside Elementary	99	21	68	11	23	38	38
John Bernard Croak, V. C. Memorial	31	10	74	16	16	42	42
Jubilee Elementary	41	10	76	15	15	54	32
MacDonald Elementary (Dominion)	37	16	76	8	19	30	51
Marion Bridge	34	0	100	0	21	29	50
Mira Road Elementary	20	25	50	25	25	30	45
Mount Carmel Elementary	35	17	77	6	23	40	37
Mountainview-East Bay Complex	71	10	75	15	7	41	52
North Highlands Elementary	19	26	63	11	21	47	32
Rankin Memorial	9	0	33	67	0	78	22
Riverside Elementary	40	18	65	18	33	45	23
Robin Foote Elementary	38	5	66	29	11	45	45

Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board (Continued)

2005 Elementary Literacy Assessment • **SCHOOL RESULTS**							
	Number of Students	Reading			Writing		
		Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)
Seton Elementary	37	16	70	14	19	30	51
Shipyard Elementary	42	17	76	7	33	29	38
St. Agnes Elementary	39	15	79	5	18	49	33
St. Anne's Elementary	30	23	60	17	30	33	37
St. Joseph Elementary (Sydney Mines)	36	17	72	11	22	42	36
St. Mary's-St. Joseph's Complex	34	12	74	15	21	29	50
Sydney River Elementary	58	0	81	19	7	31	62
Tompkins Memorial	34	12	74	15	24	38	38

Chignecto-Central Regional School Board

2005 Elementary Literacy Assessment • **SCHOOL RESULTS**							
		Reading			Writing		
	Number of Students	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)
Nova Scotia	9976	12	71	17	21	33	46
Chignecto Central Regional School Board	1852	13	72	16	23	32	45
A. G. Baillie Memorial	71	4	75	21	13	31	56
Acadia Street Elementary	18	17	72	11	28	33	39
Brookfield Memorial	43	12	79	9	19	30	51
Central Colchester Junior High	65	3	78	18	12	23	65
Cobequid District Elementary	13	23	54	23	8	38	54
Cumberland North Academy	58	5	79	16	24	21	55
Cyrus Eaton Elementary	21	24	57	19	33	29	38
Debert Elementary	22	23	59	18	32	36	32
Dr. W. A. MacLeod Elementary	26	12	65	23	12	35	54
East Stewiacke Elementary	31	10	77	13	16	32	52
F. H. MacDonald Elementary	68	12	74	15	29	35	35
G. R. Saunders Elementary	56	14	64	21	20	32	48
Hilden	25	20	60	20	12	48	40
Junction Road Elementary	39	15	62	23	31	21	49
Kennetcook District Elementary	13	8	69	23	0	77	23
North River Elementary	43	26	67	7	23	40	37
Northport Consolidated	15	20	60	20	33	33	33
Oxford Regional High	39	13	77	10	23	33	44
Parrsboro Regional Elementary	34	18	71	12	24	44	32
Pictou Academy-Dr. T. McCulloch Junior High	44	7	84	9	45	32	23
Rawdon District	27	19	78	4	19	30	52
Redcliff Middle	182	10	77	12	23	23	54
River Hebert Elementary	25	24	64	12	28	28	44
River John Consolidated	8	13	75	13	25	38	38
Riverside Education Centre	225	14	70	16	24	36	40
Spring Street Academy	71	14	72	14	31	37	32

Chignecto-Central Regional School Board (Continued)

2005 Elementary Literacy Assessment • **SCHOOL RESULTS**							
	Number of Students	Reading			Writing		
		Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)
Stewiacke Elementary	14	14	86	0	21	43	36
Tatamagouche Elementary	33	9	82	9	24	18	58
Temperance Street	16	19	69	13	38	31	31
Thorburn Consolidated	24	17	67	17	17	50	33
Trenton Middle High	40	18	70	13	33	33	35
Truro Junior High	134	11	65	24	20	32	48
Uniacke District	46	17	59	24	33	28	39
Upper Stewiacke Elementary	9	33	44	22	67	11	22
Wallace Consolidated	13	8	85	8	23	31	46
Walter Duggan Consolidated	68	7	74	19	16	35	49
West Colchester Consolidated	30	10	87	3	23	27	50
West End Memorial	24	8	79	13	38	13	50
West Highlands	34	12	74	15	21	44	35
West Pictou Consolidated	76	13	70	17	21	28	51

Conseil scolaire acadien provincial

2005 Elementary Literacy Assessment • **SCHOOL RESULTS**							
	Number of Students	Reading			Writing		
		Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)
Conseil scolaire acadien provincial	318	17	71	12	32	23	45
Centre Étoile de L'Acadie	16	13	63	25	25	6	69
École acadienne de Pomquet	17	6	71	24	35	24	41
École acadienne de Truro	14	7	93	0	43	21	36
École Beaubassin	37	11	62	27	19	11	70
École Beau-Port	24	29	71	0	42	33	25
École Belleville	16	25	69	6	63	19	19
École Bois-Joli	55	2	78	20	11	33	56
École Jean-Marie-Gay	16	19	75	6	31	6	63
École Joseph-Dugas	30	37	63	0	33	23	43
École NDA	17	18	71	12	41	6	53
École Pubnico-Ouest	28	25	71	4	50	36	14
École Rose-des-Vents	14	0	79	21	14	29	57
École Stella-Maris	14	36	64	0	36	36	29
École Wedgeport	11	9	91	0	45	27	27

Halifax Regional School Board

2005 Elementary Literacy Assessment • SCHOOL RESULTS

	Number of Students	Reading			Writing		
		Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)
Nova Scotia	9976	12	71	17	21	33	46
Halifax Regional School Board	3879	10	70	20	18	32	50
Admiral Westphal Elementary School	17	12	71	18	29	41	29
Alderney	26	8	77	15	19	35	46
AshLee Jefferson	89	3	66	30	12	36	52
Astral Drive Elementary	90	2	69	29	13	32	54
Atlantic View	25	0	72	28	20	20	60
Basinview Drive Community	53	0	77	23	6	17	77
Beaver Bank-Monarch Drive Elementary	41	12	78	10	20	32	49
Beaverbank-Kinsac Elementary	40	5	83	13	30	30	40
Bedford South	58	5	55	40	10	34	55
Bel Ayr	44	11	70	18	18	32	50
Bell Park Academic Centre	54	6	78	17	28	46	26
Bicentennial	17	35	53	12	35	24	41
Brookhouse	38	3	74	24	13	45	42
Brookside Junior High	92	4	74	22	21	25	54
Burton Ettinger	60	12	80	8	18	42	40
Caldwell Road Elementary	48	4	67	29	10	33	56
Caudle Park Elementary	49	8	76	16	14	35	51
Cavalier Drive Elementary/Junior High	38	11	71	18	13	47	39
Central Spryfield	33	21	70	9	24	36	39
Chebucto Heights Elementary	29	14	76	10	24	38	38
Colby Village Elementary	47	4	70	26	9	28	64
Colonel John Stuart Elementary	27	15	59	26	19	22	59
Crichton Park	49	2	49	49	8	20	71
Duc D'Anville Elementary	54	15	65	20	28	31	41
Dutch Settlement Elementary	23	17	65	17	17	43	39
East St. Margaret's Elementary	15	7	67	27	33	13	53
Elizabeth Sutherland	29	34	59	7	31	34	34
Fairview Heights	34	18	71	12	32	41	26
George Bissett Elementary	28	11	71	18	21	32	46

Halifax Regional School Board (Continued)

2005 Elementary Literacy Assessment • **SCHOOL RESULTS**							
	Number of Students	Reading			Writing		
		Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)
Gertrude M. Parker Elementary	36	8	83	8	11	39	50
Grosvenor-Wentworth Park Elementary	38	8	71	21	13	37	50
Harbour View	40	33	63	5	40	43	18
Harrietsfield Elementary	20	10	80	10	25	40	35
Harry R Hamilton Elementary	80	6	80	14	18	24	59
Hawthorn	39	0	46	54	5	26	69
Hillside Park Elementary	27	0	78	22	22	33	44
Holland Road Elementary	43	0	58	42	0	12	88
Humber Park Elementary	41	7	76	17	17	41	41
Ian Forsyth	61	20	52	28	18	30	52
Inglis Street School	23	4	57	39	13	26	61
John MacNeil	29	10	83	7	17	41	41
John W MacLeod-Fleming Tower	58	9	76	16	14	38	48
Joseph Giles Elementary	38	5	82	13	21	42	37
Joseph Howe	22	50	50	0	50	27	23
Kingswood Elementary	71	6	69	25	8	32	59
Lakefront Consolidated Elementary	8	0	75	25	50	13	38
Lakeview Consolidated	61	15	75	10	28	23	49
LeMarchant-St. Thomas	53	0	58	42	8	26	66
Madeline Symonds Middle School	83	6	70	24	16	27	58
Michael Wallace	53	6	70	25	8	36	57
Millwood Elementary	83	7	80	13	17	40	43
Mount Edward	35	3	69	29	20	34	46
Musquodoboit Valley Education Centre	20	10	70	20	10	35	55
Nelson Whynder Elementary	16	56	44	0	81	19	0
O'Connell Drive Elementary	63	11	76	13	22	29	49
Oldfield Consolidated	22	23	59	18	9	32	59
Oxford	27	0	74	26	7	19	74
Park West School	54	15	69	17	22	30	48
Portland Estates Elementary	57	0	47	53	7	26	67
R. Jamison-Jeddore-Lakeville	48	23	65	13	17	46	38

Halifax Regional School Board (Continued)

2005 Elementary Literacy Assessment • SCHOOL RESULTS

	Number of Students	Reading			Writing		
		Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)
Ridgecliff Middle School	110	15	72	14	30	28	42
Robert K. Turner Elementary	26	15	73	12	8	35	58
Rockingham	45	9	62	29	18	22	60
Rockingstone Heights	16	0	94	6	13	19	69
Ross Road	30	10	70	20	23	50	27
Sackville Centennial Elementary	25	4	76	20	16	20	64
Sackville Heights Elementary	35	11	74	14	17	40	43
Saint Mary's	14	0	93	7	21	43	36
Sambro Elementary	19	5	84	11	0	58	42
Seaside Elementary	161	12	79	9	25	34	41
Shannon Park	56	5	75	20	16	34	50
Shatford Memorial Elementary	8	25	63	13	13	50	38
Sheet Harbour Consolidated	23	13	65	22	13	57	30
Sir Charles Tupper	43	0	70	30	12	21	67
Smokey Drive Elementary	48	19	63	19	27	40	33
South Woodside	18	6	83	11	17	33	50
Southdale-North Woodside	66	15	73	12	29	38	33
Springvale	26	8	62	31	31	19	50
St. Catherine's	36	25	61	14	33	22	44
St. Joseph's-Alexander McKay	32	22	59	19	22	38	41
St. Margaret's Bay Elementary	58	2	74	24	12	24	64
St. Patrick's-Alexandra	17	59	41	0	59	18	24
St. Stephen's	41	10	83	7	12	34	54
Sunnyside Elementary	75	5	63	32	8	25	67
Sycamore Lane Elementary	49	6	78	16	14	20	65
Tantallon Elementary	66	5	74	21	9	33	58
Upper Musquodoboit Consolidated	10	10	80	10	10	40	50
Waverley Memorial-L. C. Skerry	42	7	69	24	7	31	62
Westmount	38	16	66	18	18	37	45
William King Elementary	49	10	73	16	18	51	31

South Shore Regional School Board

2005 Elementary Literacy Assessment • **SCHOOL RESULTS**

	Number of Students	Reading			Writing		
		Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)
Nova Scotia	9976	12	71	17	21	33	46
South Shore Regional School Board	586	10	70	19	20	33	47
Bayview Community School	45	9	58	33	24	22	53
Bridgewater Elementary	79	10	72	18	16	34	49
Centre Consolidated	48	10	65	25	19	31	50
Chester Area Middle	80	16	73	11	28	43	30
Dr. John C. Wickwire Academy	78	13	67	21	13	41	46
Hebbville Academy	82	9	73	18	21	34	45
Lunenburg Junior-Senior High	19	11	63	26	11	37	53
Mill Village Consolidated	8	13	75	13	50	13	38
New Germany Elementary	41	10	83	7	12	34	54
New Ross Consolidated	15	20	80	0	47	20	33
North Queens Elementary	19	5	84	11	26	47	26
Pentz Elementary	16	0	63	38	19	25	56
Petite Rivière Elementary	9	0	89	11	22	0	78
Riverport and District Elementary	20	5	70	25	15	30	55
West Northfield Elementary	22	5	59	36	18	14	68

Strait Regional School Board

2005 Elementary Literacy Assessment - **SCHOOL RESULTS**							
	Number of Students	Reading			Writing		
		Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)
Nova Scotia	9976	12	71	17	21	33	46
Strait Regional School Board	546	12	71	18	19	33	48
Bayview Education Centre	44	7	66	27	14	20	66
Cape Breton Highlands Academy-Education Centre	29	24	62	14	34	24	41
Chedabucto Education Centre-Guysborough Academy	29	7	79	14	17	59	24
East Antigonish Academy-Education Centre	36	8	58	33	17	36	47
East Richmond Education Center	50	14	74	12	26	32	42
Fanning Memorial Education Centre	16	13	81	6	13	56	31
H. M. MacDonald Elementary	10	20	60	20	50	20	30
Inverness Education Centre	19	11	74	16	5	47	47
Mulgrave Memorial Education Centre	12	8	75	17	25	33	42
Rev. H. J. MacDonald	25	4	72	24	4	24	72
St. Andrew Junior School	91	5	70	24	5	33	62
St. Andrew's Consolidated	35	6	77	17	11	20	69
St. Mary's Education Centre	27	19	63	19	30	37	33
Tamarac Education Centre	67	10	78	12	19	39	42
West Richmond Education Centre	26	35	65	0	42	23	35
Whycocomagh Education Centre	30	20	70	10	33	27	40

Tri-County Regional School Board

2005 Elementary Literacy Assessment • SCHOOL RESULTS

	Number of Students	Reading			Writing		
		Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)	Not Yet Meeting Expectations (%)	Meeting Expectations (%)	Exceeding Expectations (%)
Nova Scotia	9976	12	71	17	21	33	46
Tri-County Regional School Board	605	15	73	12	24	37	39
Arcadia Consolidated	33	30	64	6	30	21	48
Barton Consolidated	8	0	100	0	25	13	63
Cape Sable Island Elementary	49	10	67	22	20	45	35
Carleton Consolidated	14	14	64	21	7	29	64
Digby Elementary	72	17	72	11	31	35	35
Drumlin Heights Consolidated	25	36	56	8	20	52	28
Evelyn Richardson Memorial Elementary	41	12	66	22	17	39	44
Forest Ridge Academy	29	3	72	24	14	31	55
Hillcrest Academy	66	17	73	11	20	38	42
Lockeport Elementary	22	27	64	9	23	41	36
Meadowfields Community School	80	9	83	9	18	40	43
Plymouth	29	17	79	3	45	21	34
Port Maitland Consolidated	34	15	74	12	35	38	26
South Centennial	13	31	69	0	38	31	31
Weymouth Consolidated	35	9	83	9	17	54	29
Yarmouth Central	41	5	83	12	37	34	29

English 12 and English/Communications 12 Examinations

There has been significant improvement observed in our grade 12 students' reading and writing performance based on the January and June examinations.

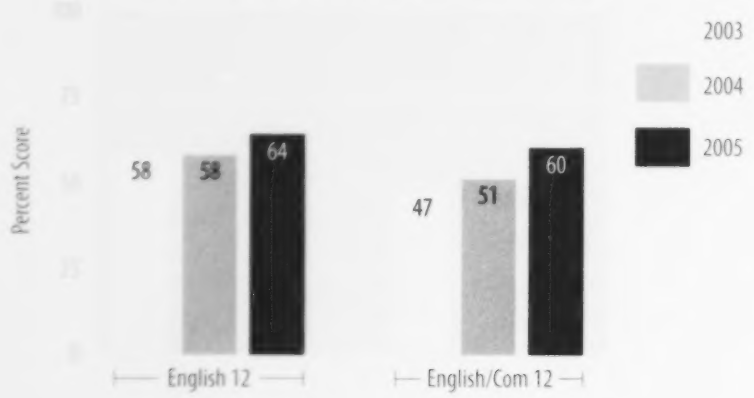
Nova Scotia Examinations (NSE) were first administered to grade 12 students completing their English 12 and English/Communications 12 courses in January 2000.

The pass mark for NSE is 50 percent. The examinations count as 30 percent of students' final course marks. Class marks comprise the other 70 percent. The results presented below are for the provincial examination only. The graph shows the provincial results in both courses over the last few school years.

Grade 12 English Language Arts Examinations

The overall average has improved from 58 percent (with a pass rate of 76 percent) in 2004, to 64 percent (with a pass rate of 89 percent) in 2005. Similar significant improvement is noted for students who were enrolled in English/Communications 12. The provincial average for this course has increased from 51 percent (with a pass rate of 58 percent) in 2004 to 60 percent (with a pass rate of 81 percent) in 2005.

Provincial Results for English 12 and English/Communications 12

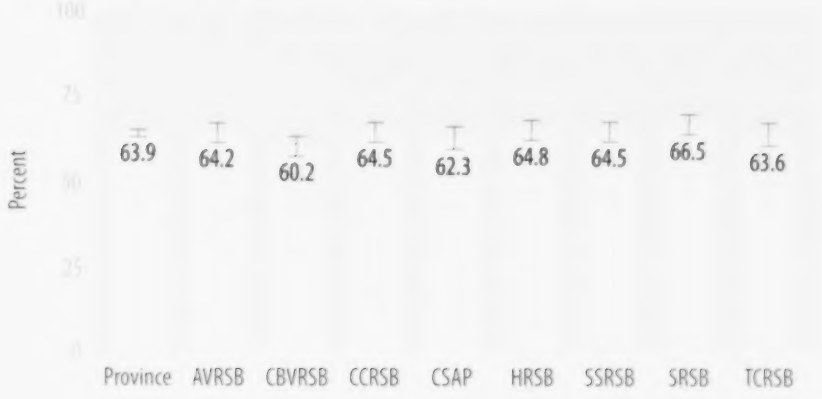


Facts:

The provincial pass rate for English 12 was 88.8 percent, with 9886 students writing the exam.

The highest mark was 97 percent and the lowest mark was 20 percent.

English 12 Provincial and Board Results for 2005

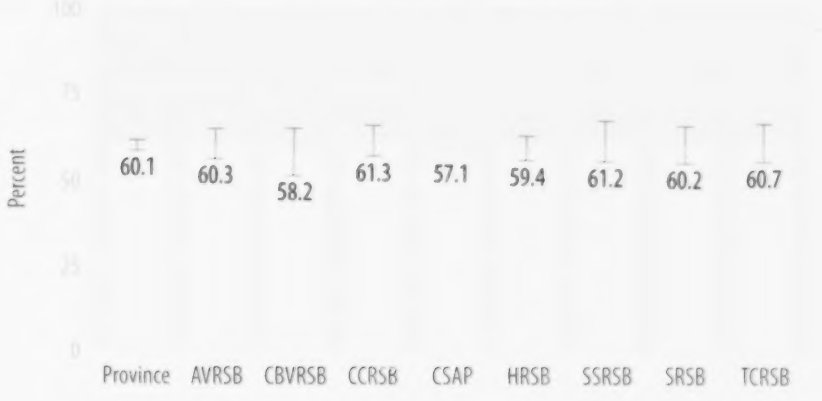


Facts:

English/Communications 12 examinations were written by 1799 students, with a pass rate of 81.3 percent.

The highest mark was 90 percent and the lowest mark was 25 percent.

English/Communication 12 Provincial and Board Results for 2005



National Assessment

There is no new information to report for language arts. The first administration of a new national assessment, the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP), is scheduled for 2007. PCAP, replacing SAIP, will assess students in reading next spring.

International Assessment

The international assessment, PISA, is scheduled for administration in the spring of 2006. The results will be presented in a future edition of the *Minister's Report to Parents*.

In 2000, 15-year-old students in Nova Scotia participated in the PISA reading assessment, along with students in other provinces and in 31 other countries. Canadian territories do not participate. Canada was one of the top-ranked countries in the assessment. PISA was readministered in the spring of 2003 with over 40 countries participating.

In both the 2000 and 2003 assessments, Nova Scotia did significantly better than the majority of participating countries. However, Nova Scotia did not perform as well as Canada as a whole.

The international assessment, PIRLS, is also scheduled for administration in the spring of 2006. The results of this international reading assessment of grade 4 students will be reported in a future edition of the *Minister's Report to Parents*.

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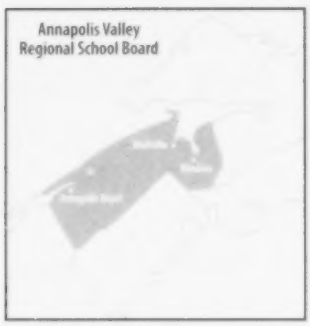
Telling Our Stories

Nova Scotia School Boards

ANNAPOLIS VALLEY
REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD



Initiatives for At-Risk Students

The primary goal of the Annapolis Regional School Board is to improve student achievement.

To reach that end, the board is paying particular attention to the needs of at-risk students. Earlier this year, the board opened a centre for autistic students and two alternative high schools that will address the needs of students for whom school is a challenge. There is also a renewed focus on teacher mentoring, which will improve their educational experience and increase the effectiveness of educators across the school board.

The Autism Centre, located in Kingston and District School, opened on December 8. Kym Hume, the Consultant of Autism, is working regularly at the facility, which is a combination of resource centre, lending library, and meeting room for professional development.

The centre comes as the result of a joint research project of the IWK Health Centre, Dalhousie University, the Department of Education, and the AVRSB. Research showed the need for accessible materials and expertise in the Valley. The Autism Centre is AVRSB's response to this need, which has grown with the increased number of families moving into the area to be near the help they require. The centre also offers support programs, professional development, and other materials that parents and educators need to address the needs of students with autism.

Ms. Hume, along with a psychologist, two speech language pathologists, two resource teachers, and a classroom teacher, will use the centre as a permanent base to co-ordinate all activities. The facility is already booked to host an autism conference on May 12 and 13, with speakers who specialize in both the elementary and secondary levels.

The first AVRSB alternative high school, Highbury Education Centre, opened in September 2004; the second, Lawrencetown Education Centre opened in February. The goal is to keep more students in school. Too many students have been leaving school before graduation. That, combined with the closure of vocational schools, meant students not destined for university, but still needing an educational environment to foster life skills and citizenship, have had no program to prepare them for the workforce. The alternative high school fills this void by combining academics with experiential education and workplace experiences.

The curriculum includes outward-bound style learning experiences such as camping trips to Keji, team-building exercises, and field trips to Nova Scotia Community College. The specific goal is to acquire credits toward graduation, give students skills to cope with the larger high school setting, or help them make the transition to the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning.

CAPE BRETON-VICTORIA
REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD

Bringing the World to Cape Breton Schools

The Nova Scotia International Student Program gives international students the opportunity to study in Nova Scotia's regular school system. The program is a joint venture between the Nova Scotia Department of Education and the seven English language school boards. The NSISP has grown to be one of the largest high school programs in Canada and will involve more than 450 students from thirteen countries in the 2005–2006 academic year.

The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board began its partnership with the Nova Scotia International Student program five years ago. At that time, the board welcomed twelve students to Sydney Academy and Holy Angels. Sydney Academy principal Brian Dwyer and Russell MacDonald, co-ordinator of Programs 7–12, were instrumental in bringing this program to the board. This year we have 58 students representing eight countries from around the world including Brazil, Mexico, Germany, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and Hong Kong.

The success of the program is attributable in large part to the dedicated host families in our communities. Strong support from staff, including four homestay co-ordinators, students, and our school communities have have also helped make the program a big success. Currently we have 42 host families from Sydney, Glace Bay, New Waterford and Sydney Mines. As the program grows, so does the involvement of our schools. We now have students attending Sydney Academy, Holy Angels, Riverview, Glace Bay High, Breton Education Centre, Sherwood Park Education Centre, and Memorial High.

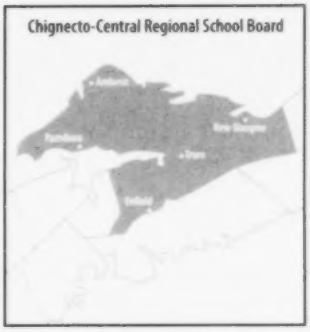
The international student program continues to evolve. This year the NSISP sponsored a scholarship presented to a deserving student who was affected by last December's Tsunami Disaster.

Thirawat Konkaew, whose home region of Phuket was ravaged by the tidal wave, received the first full scholarship to study in Nova Scotia. He is attending Riverview Rural High School.

Thirawat, who lost his father and other relatives in the tsunami, is thoroughly enjoying his experience. His English continues to improve daily, which is due to his genuine enthusiasm and dedication to learning the language. Thirawat also had the honour of traveling to Halifax to meet Premier John Hamm.

"I am enjoying the many new experiences including how to study in English and living with Canadian people," he says.

CHIGNECTO-CENTRAL
REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD



Laptops Make Learning Fun

Four grade 4 classes from different schools in the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board have the world at their fingertips this year.

Students at Brookfield Elementary, Cobequid Consolidated Elementary in Old Barns, Junction Road Elementary in Springhill, and Thorburn Consolidated have the unique opportunity to use a laptop for learning for the next two years. The board launched the 1:1 Laptops for Learning pilot program in September.

The project is the first of its kind at the elementary school level in Nova Scotia.

"We selected four schools, one in each of the four Families of Schools," said Dr. Larry Elchuck, Assistant Director of Education Services.

Each class has received a class server, printer, two still cameras, two video cameras, two web cameras, and an extensive array of learning software. Each student received an iBook laptop, which will be their personal laptop for the next two years. Students also have the opportunity to collaborate with students in the other participating schools through technology that was acquired to support the Chignecto Virtual High School.

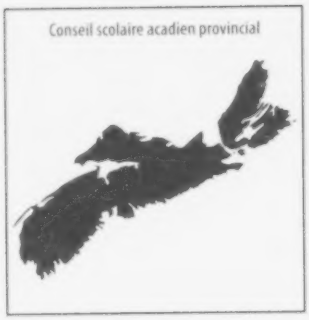
"It's my belief that if you put a laptop in the hands of a child, that child will read more, that child will write more, that child will research more," said Dr. Elchuck, who has studied how laptops in the classroom affect student achievement, motivation, and creativity. "Everything we've read in terms of other laptop initiatives across North America actually supported those things in a positive manner."

The project goals include improved literacy and communication skills and improved use of technology. The expectation is that technology will be imbedded in student outcomes across the curriculum. In most cases, laptop use will simply augment traditional learning methods including tactile methods like using blocks in mathematics classes.

"You can't use a computer unless you can read, so basically the books are still important, writing is still important," said teacher Jo-Ann Mumford. "I see great gains, and parents have told me they've seen gains. I see kids engaged in learning and doing, who want to be here. I can't see it not helping."

Fun with learning is another reason why the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board embarked on the pilot project. Brookfield Elementary student Alberto Serracin thinks the laptop adds some fun to the traditional school program. "It's like being home on your computer looking up stuff on the Internet, but you're actually doing work, which is really fun," he said.

CONSEIL SCOLAIRE ACADIEN PROVINCIAL



Acadian Schools : A commitment towards the future!

The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2006. For francophones in the province, it is also an occasion to celebrate the provincial government's official recognition of French education. Mr. Darrell Samson, the new superintendent, wanted to take this opportunity to meet with all CSAP school staff, parents, students, and all other stakeholders from the communities in order to emphasize the success of previous years and get a sense of the desired vision for the future.

"The participation of all stakeholders throughout the province was very encouraging," says Mr. Samson. "They talked about the challenges of recruiting and retaining students in the French education system. A little more than half of the students who have a right to a French education are currently attending a CSAP school. The information shared will help the school board draw up an action plan that will emphasize the advantages of a French education. The school board's size allows the superintendent to meet with the stakeholders in their own community which encourages an honest dialogue between the stakeholders and the school system.

The creation of pre-primary classes has turned out to be an excellent way to involve students and their families early in the French community and therefore, prepare them well for their school experience. As research has shown, the younger the child, the easier is it to learn successfully in French even when French is not the language spoken in the community.

Two projects were initiated and the results thus far indicate that the implementation of pre-primary classes is a realistic solution to counter assimilation and to encourage families to enrol their children in a French school. "With a quality pre-primary program designed specifically for our communities, we will be able to offer adequate support to families " says Camille Maillet, president of La Fédération des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse. "The parents are very pleased with this new addition to the school system and hope the program will continue and expand into other areas where the need is felt."

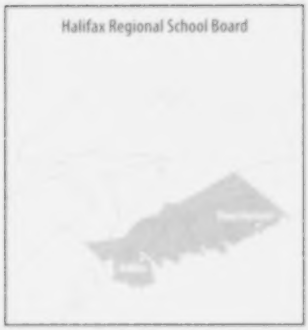
The CSAP is committed to offering the best education possible in order to make students fluent in Canada's two official languages and to help them realize the importance of allowing French to be an integral part in their social and cultural experiences. To reach these goals, the curriculum must include various and innovative activities that promote an active lifestyle in French, in a variety of contexts.

At l'École Beaubassin in Halifax, an example of these types of initiatives is being piloted this year. Thanks to the principal's support and the Program Development Assistance Fund, Cyrille Deveau's grade 4 students have traded chairs for exercise balls.

It was the physical education teacher, Régis Bélanger, who first came up with the idea. It was initially a strategy meant to promote physical education in the classroom while at the same time improving posture and back muscles. But the balls are more much more than that! After an adaptation period of a few days, Mr. Deveau noticed that students were finding it easier to concentrate for longer periods of time. The more active students had a way to use up their energy. Soon, daily exercises were integrated as part of the routine when changing subjects or just to relax. Music was added to these exercises and students along with their teacher were soon bouncing around the classroom or learning a new motion to the rhythm of French music.

The CSAP is proud of this type of initiative which illustrates a school environment that is both stimulating and rewarding. Students who attend French schools in the province receive special attention which encourages them to commit to an active lifestyle ... en français, bien sûr !

HALIFAX
REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD



Helping Students Stay in School

Naomi Young used to think school was not for her. The Auburn Drive High School student struggled to pass her courses and felt disconnected from her studies.

"I wasn't focused on anything, and I didn't care if I had work done or if I met the deadlines," says the bright, engaging 17-year-old.

That was until the Halifax Regional School Board launched the Options and Opportunities pilot project at Auburn in September 2005. O_2, as it has quickly become known, aims to make new connections between students, the classroom and the workplace.

Designed to help students like Young, O_2 relies upon an Academy Model of Education; a school-within-a-school that offers a more personal and supportive learning environment.

"When you walk into a classroom, the students are more actively engaged in learning," says teacher Judy Dickson. "They have a sense of purpose."

O_2 is a program for all students but the pilot targets those who are not engaged academically. Often they are students who have felt as though they didn't fit in at high school.

Young is among 36 students in Grades 11 and 12 who are putting O_2 to the test this year. The program will expand to include Grade 10 students in the fall.

The academic curriculum is combined with a career theme that shows students how their classroom learning can be put to use when they join the workforce after graduation.

The academies partner with employers, community organizations, and post-secondary institutions with opportunities for co-op work placements and credits for service learning.

The hope is that students will graduate, find satisfying work, or pursue a post-secondary program.

While it is early to measure results, Dickson says signs are positive. There are fewer discipline referrals, improved attendance and better grades attest to what O_2 can do for students.

An O_2 work opportunity at a big downtown hotel sold Young on a career in the tourism and hospitality industry. In the 100 hours she spent at the hotel, Young divided her time between housekeeping, food and beverage service and attending the front desk.

"I work better hands-on, being able to do something instead of sitting in a class," she says.

Grade 11 students are matched with mentors, either through co-op placements or through company volunteers who act as a career big brothers or sisters. The partnerships can lead to summer internships, youth apprenticeships or community volunteer assignments, and students can use the real world experience as credit toward graduation.

This year Young is showing up for school, watching her marks improve, building an impressive portfolio, planning for life after graduation.

"I do things for me now," she says. "I don't follow everyone else."

SOUTH SHORE
REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD

Developing Strategic Readers at All Levels

The goal of the South Shore Regional School Board is to develop strategic readers.

"A strategic reader not only can read the passage, but can tell you how they arrived at an understanding of unfamiliar words, complex sentences, or difficult concepts," says Stephen Jamieson, the region's elementary literacy mentor.

Exposure to the world of reading begins before school. The provincial pre-primary pilot programs introduce literacy learning. So does the Transition to School program offered in South Shore schools. Set in the child's future classroom, the program provides a positive, comfortable atmosphere to ease the child's first steps in formal literacy learning.

"Ours is an integrated approach," explains elementary student development co-ordinator Yvonne Rafuse. "Our teachers embrace ongoing professional development. We have literacy mentors and school literacy teams supporting teachers and students. Parent support groups and library volunteers offer further support. We provide family literacy links on our website … there are numerous elements."

Technology is one of those elements. For those with identified learning needs, the Assistive Technology Centre provides individualized technology-based support at all grade levels. In public schools, great strides have been made to integrate technology with literacy learning.

Readers use a variety of strategies so teachers must as well. In-services support teachers in gaining knowledge about how to use specific techniques in the classroom and to guide students in becoming independent, fluent readers. Active Young Readers, Active Readers, and Writers in Action, provincially supported, locally administered programs supporting literacy teachers, provide a balanced literacy approach at all levels. Co-teaching, team teaching, and other innovative delivery methods respond to the multiple challenges of literacy education and the different learning styles of students.

"I have grade 7 students who often know the formal strategies they've employed in reading a difficult passage," reports middle level literacy mentor Liz Brideau-Clark. "They will tell me they were 'inferencing' or 'visualising.'"

Brideau-Clark says integration and infusion benefit all students. "We're seeing the wider benefit. Awareness of reading strategies is as necessary for the independent reader as for one who is struggling, because they will face more difficult texts as they continue in school. They need to know what tools they have and how best to use them."

Reinforcing literacy learning is the goal of summer literacy camps, a unique feature of the South Shore's approach. Organized and conducted by teachers for middle-level students, the camps provide ongoing literacy education during the summer recess.

Senior-level literacy education is especially vital. Students can continue to struggle with literacy in high school. Because many will leave formal literacy learning behind when they leave high school, there is urgency in mobilizing support. Young adults enter a world in which independent literacy is increasingly necessary.

STRAIT
REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD

Connecting Math to the Workplace

In an innovative effort to provide students who enter various trades programs with the appropriate mathematical background, the Strait Regional School Board has taken the approach of creating a locally-developed course, Mathematics Trades and Technology 12.

Mathematics Trades and Technology 12 is a hands-on course designed to improve students' mathematical knowledge directly related to the trades areas. Mathematical outcomes are addressed to reflect the type of learning that will occur when students move from public school to a trades training environment. The course is multidisciplinary in nature and will create opportunities for students to connect math to the workplace. It focuses on the fundamental concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry needed by students in trade programs.

The Strait Regional School Board recognizes that mathematics is not just for math majors and engineers. It is not just about pondering imaginary numbers or calculating complex equations. Math is much more. It is about helping individuals to make daily decisions that will enhance their personal and professional lives.

The course was developed by the Strait Regional School Board in co-operation with the Department of Education and the Strait Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College. Students will begin the course in February 2006.

Learning from a Distance Gives Access and Flexibility

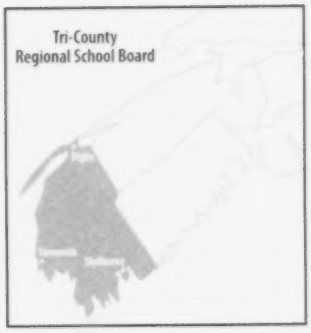
For the past 13 years, students in the Strait Region have had the option to register for courses that might be unavailable to them if not for access to computer technology. Using computers in schools and homes, students enjoy access to 22 courses via the Internet.

Students enrol in distance education courses for a variety of reasons. Students like the independence of an online program, and they prefer the freedom and flexibility to do the work when it is most convenient for them. Others enrol because the course they want is simply not available to them at their own school, and still others find their timetable compromised by scheduling decisions made at the school.

Students choose from a variety of distance education classes, including Sociology, Oceans, Calculus 12, Entrepreneurship, and Accounting. With a maximum enrolment of 22 students, these high-quality programs are an attractive option.

The board offers a flexible delivery schedule tailored to specific student requirements. Teachers, who are experienced subject specialists, are assigned regularly scheduled time for delivering the course, in addition to teaching real-time sections of the same courses. Students, however, may take the courses and fit them into their schedule. Students from Nova Scotia, Argentina, England, and Quebec have all benefitted from this experience.

TRI-COUNTY
REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD



Helping Students Succeed

The board has launched two new projects designed to build collaborative school and community support networks for students with identified behavioural challenges. Promoting Academics and Enhancing Self-Esteem for Students with Identified Behavioural Challenges are both dynamic programs providing educational opportunities that enhance students' academic skills, promote personal development, and encourage active citizenship by providing problem-solving situations in real-life settings.

The goal is to reduce the rate of student disruptive behaviours and school vandalism, as well as reduce student absenteeism and student dropout rates. The programs offer support services to struggling youth and their families while raising the self-esteem of youth participating in the program.

Programming and services are provided for students in grades 7 to 12 at Barrington Municipal High in Shelburne County, and for students in grades 7 to 12 at Digby Regional High School. Between 12 and 20 students identified by classroom teachers as violent or at risk are involved in the program at each school.

Students Rise to Environmental and Scientific Challenges

The Tri-County Regional School Board has also taken steps to raise environmental awareness among students.

The board is partnering with two local environment clubs—Tusket River Environmental Protection Agency (TREPA) and the Tusket River Chapter of Trout Unlimited Canada (Tusket TU)—to raise environmental awareness among students.

The board, TREPA, and Tusket TU have obtained funding to establish environment clubs in more than half of the Tri-County Regional School Board schools. The schools are now undertaking environmental projects such as beach sweeps and garbage cleanup along rivers, and they have plans for a major environmental event on Earth Day.

Several school environment clubs chose to participate in a unique environmental entrepreneurship exercise where the board, TREPA, Tusket TU, and the Southwest Shore Energy Office teamed up to produce energy saving kits. The kits, provided by the local merchants, normally retail for $75, but the students sold them for $25, and each environment club kept $7 per kit as profit. The kits included items such as energy-saving light bulbs and low-flow shower heads.

This year the board expanded its Science Olympics competition across the region. Originally started in 2000 as an enrichment event in Yarmouth County schools, the event has been adopted by schools in Digby and Shelburne counties.

Teams of four from grades 5,6,7, and 8 in Yarmouth and from grades 5 and 6 in Digby and Shelburne participate in full-day competitions. The event requires students to use reasoning and logic to meet the science challenges presented to them. Medal winners from all three counties meet in regional showdown in the final. Trophies for daily first-place medal winners, donated by the respective Nova Scotia Teachers Union locals, are engraved and then showcased annually in the winning schools.

Conclusion

There are areas where we have made significant progress: reading in the elementary years and language arts in senior high school. There are others areas where we have significant challenges: mathematics at all levels. There is much more we can do to help our students strive for excellence and reach their goals.

Work is already under way to improve achievement in mathematics at all grade levels. Over the past year we have begun to target resources and focus efforts at helping more students succeed. In our math strategy, we have increased the amount of time spent on math, added math mentors and math leaders to support teachers in every board, increased course options at senior high, provided more learning resources, and conducted more professional development for teachers.

It will take time to get where we need to be, but we are making progress.

Our assessment results will continue to guide us—parents, teachers, school boards, the Department of Education, and the school community—in our efforts to improve student achievement.

We are confident that our plan for education, Learning for Life II: Brighter Futures Together, will help all of our students reach their full potential.

Learning for Life is available at **www.EDnet.ns.ca**, and information on the Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia is available at **http://plans.EDnet.ns.ca**.

The *Minister's Report to Parents* will be published again next year. It will give parents more information about our students and their achievements. Future reports will include school-by-school results for grade 3 math and grades 3 and 9 literacy.

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